Conference on Disarmament

14 September 2018

English
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Note verbale dated 14 September 2018 sent to the Conference on Disarmament by the Permanent Mission of France, transmitting the statement of 21 August 2018 by the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the chemical weapons attack in Ghouta

The Permanent Representation of France to the Conference on Disarmament presents its compliments to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and has the honour to transmit herewith the statement of 21 August 2018, by the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the chemical weapons attack in Ghouta.

The Permanent Representation of France would be grateful if the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament would circulate this document to member States and observers in the Conference and issue it as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Permanent Representation of France to the Conference on Disarmament avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.

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Syria — Statement of the United States, the United Kingdom and France on the Fifth Anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Attack in Ghouta, Syria

21 August 2018

1. On the fifth anniversary of the horrific Ghouta sarin gas attack, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France reiterate their condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by the Bashar Al-Assad regime. Since 2012, the Syrian regime has resorted to the use of chemical weapons during military offensives not only in Ghouta, but also in Khan Sheikhoun, Al Lataminah, Saraqib and Douma, killing and injuring thousands of people. As permanent members of the Security Council, we reaffirm our shared resolve to prevent the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and to hold it accountable for any such use.

2. Our position on the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons is unchanged. As we have shown, we will respond appropriately to any further use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, as these weapons have had such devastating humanitarian consequences for the Syrian people.

3. We welcome the establishment of assignment arrangements at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), in accordance with its authority under the Chemical Weapons Convention, as confirmed by the decision of the Conference of the States Parties. These arrangements will help ensure that anyone who resorts to the use of chemical weapons in Syria can be identified. We welcome the launch of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons on 23 January 2018, and we call on all countries that are committed to fight impunity to join it. We remain committed to securing justice for victims of the use of chemical weapons.

4. Furthermore, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France are gravely concerned about reports of a military offensive by the Syrian regime against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Idlib and about the offensive's consequences in humanitarian terms. We also emphasize our concern about the potential for the further — illegal — use of chemical weapons.

5. We urge the supporters of the Assad regime to use their influence to ensure respect for the international standard against the use of chemical weapons. We call upon those countries to recognize that the uncontrolled use of chemical weapons by any State presents an unacceptable security threat to all States. We call upon the international community to support our collective efforts to end the use by Syria of chemical weapons. And we remain resolved to act if the Assad regime once again resorts to the use of chemical weapons.